



**NAVAJO NATION
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 20, 2011

CONTACT: Rick Abasta
Public Information Officer
Phone: 928-871-6560
Fax: 928-871-7090
Email: rabasta@nndcd.org

Local Governance Act certification achieved by five chapters



Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Director Arbin Mitchell pointed out that Local Governance Act certification is an opportunity for chapters to improve and grow their communities. Seated next to Mitchell is Ray Tsosie, program and projects specialist. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK-It was a good day to be certified.

There were five Navajo Nation chapters that received Local Governance Act certification on July 11, 2011.

The 22nd Navajo Nation Council Resources and Development Committee approved the Five Management System policies and procedures for Chilchinbeto, Leupp, Teesto, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, and Tsidii To'ii chapters.

A quorum was reached with Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso and Kayenta), Leonard Pete (Chinle), Roscoe Smith (Crystal, Ft. Defiance, Red Lake and Sawmill), and David Tom (Toadlena-Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tse'alnaozt'ii, Sheep Springs, Beclabito, Gadiiahi-To'koi). Absent were George Apache (Alamo, Ramah, Tohajiilee) and Leonard Tsosie (Baca-Pre-witt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake).

Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Director Arbin Mitchell said LGA certification is an opportunity for chapters to build their communities.

"When you become certified, you're given that opportunity to use those five manuals out there," Mitchell said.

He counted off the opportunities available to chapters: business site leasing, home site leasing, alternative form of government,

local ordinances, and streamlining expenditure processes.

"It gives you that opportunity to go into contract, into sub-grant agreements with the Navajo Nation central government," Mitchell said. "It's all about opportunity and it's up to you to get it done."

Stanley Yazzie, deputy director for Community Development, agreed with Mitchell and said the opportunities available are contrary to conventional wisdom floating around out there at the chapter level.

"I wanted to cover one thing," Yazzie said, "Some people, even the delegates, say that when you become certified, you no longer receive help from the Nation.

"Regardless of certification, the Local Governance Support Centers still have the responsibility to assist all of the 110 chapters," he added.

NND CD worked with the Office of the Auditor General and paid an outside consultant to conduct the FMS reviews, at a cost of \$5,000 per chapter. Dreams Come True Incorporated of Albuquerque conducted the reviews via certified public accountant Eliot Stenzel.

Teesto Chapter was the first to become certified on July 11 at the Navajo Nation Council Chambers.

"It's an honor to come before the newly established Resources and Development Committee of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council," said sponsoring council delegate Elmer Begay.

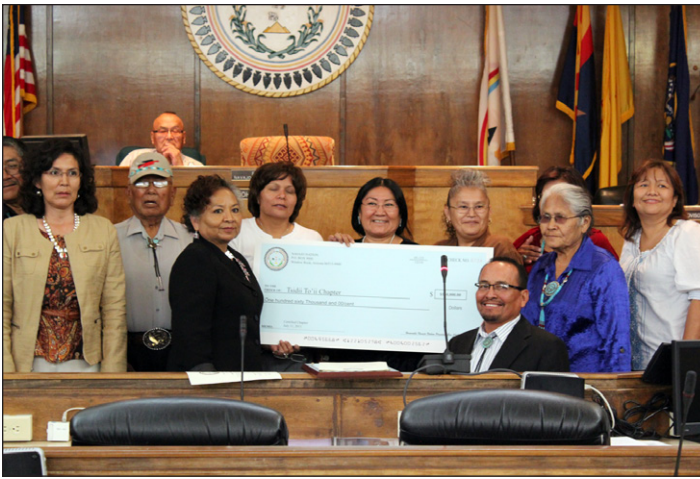
Begay said Teesto met the safeguard of property and provided financial reporting compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Navajo Nation Auditor General Elizabeth Begay concurred and said the purpose of her review was to determine whether the chapter's financial transactions are authorized, valid and properly recorded to permit the preparation of accurate financial statements and other financial reports.

"Therefore, in accordance with the authorities vested in the Office of the

Auditor General, we recommend to this committee, the Resources and Development Committee, to approve the Teesto Chapter for governance certification," Begay said.

**"It's all about
opportunity and it's
up to you to get it
done," Mitchell said.**



Tsidii To'ii Chapter proudly display their check for \$160,000 along with staff from the Local Governance Support Centers and Navajo Nation Council delegates. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

The chapter also received the blessing of the Ft. Defiance Local Governance Support Center.

Cecelia Largo-Nez, senior programs and projects specialist for the Ft. Defiance LGSC, said, "I do fully recommend for Teesto to get certified."

Teesto Chapter was certified by a vote of 3-0.

Tsidii To'ii Chapter Vice President Isabelle Walker was thankful for the opportunity to become certified.

"We are very thankful to all the people who spent their time preparing and reviewing our documents," Walker said.

Chapter secretary-treasurer Mitzi Begay said the Tsidii To'ii Chapter maintained contact with the Western LGSC through emails, phone calls and visits.

"I'd like to thank the LGSC office and their team members. They worked very hard with our chapter coordinator and office specialist," Begay said.

Delegate Roscoe Smith was appreciative during the report.

"I want to express my appreciation to the chapter officials and the LGSC administration," Smith said. "It was a major undertaking at the local level and I'm proud of that accomplishment."

By a vote of 3-0, Tsidii To'ii Chapter became LGA certified.

Tiis Tsoh Sikaad brought supporters with them from New Mexico, including reigning 2011-2012 Miss Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Gavelita Bitsui.

Council delegate LoRenzo Bates was thankful.

"On behalf of Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, we appreciate this opportunity to come before you today for this very honorable, well-thought out, and featured event for Tiis Tsoh Sikaad," Bates said.

Bates gave thanks and appreciation and said the previous council delegate, George Arthur, was also a major contributor to the chapter's certification success.

Arthur was afforded an opportunity to speak.

"For 20 years, I've been coming in here and doing business on behalf of Tiis Tsoh Sikaad," Arthur said. "It is an honor to be here today and I give a lot of credit to our leadership and the local people of Tiis Tsoh Sikaad."

"I appreciate the opportunity. I'm humbled by being in these chambers," he added.

Roger Joe, senior program and projects specialist for Northern LGSC, gave his approval for certification.

"They've done a remarkable job. From our standpoint, we issued a letter of assurance and they are ready to be certified," Joe said.

By a vote of 3-0, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad was certified.

Delegate Walter Phelps said he was happy and thrilled to be before the Resources and Development Committee with Leupp Chapter.

"I just want to share that this work, the Five Management System, started many years ago," Phelps said. "It dates several years back, to 2006."

He said the chapter received the financial system in June 2010, which was reviewed a couple months later by the LGSC in August.

The public comment period took place during the same time and by January 2011, the three-month review was completed by the Auditor General.

"On April 14, the compliance review was very favorable and that is what we brought before you," Phelps said.

Regina Allison, senior program and projects specialist for Western LGSC, said her staff is charged with the responsibility of preparing chapters.

"I have a wonderful accounting staff and they have worked very hard with the Leupp Chapter in providing technical assistance, administrative support," Allison said. "I do also want to say congratulations to the Leupp Chapter for their tireless efforts to reach this point."

"I appreciate the opportunity. I'm humbled by being in these chambers," Arthur said.

Leupp Chapter President Thomas Cody was elated and optimistic about the future.

“I think our community really supports us in what we’re trying to do,” Cody said.

“I just want to say give us the chance to grow our community,” Cody said.

He said the community’s land use planning is in place and they are now looking toward Community Land Use Planning certification.

“I just want to say give us the chance to grow our community,” Cody said.

Leupp Chapter was certified by a vote of 3-0.

Delegate Katherine Benally sponsored Chilchinbeto Chapter for certification.

Speaking in Navajo, Benally said, “We usually hear that there is no work coming from the Local Governance Support Centers. Today is proof of otherwise.”

Benally thanked the previous delegates for their work in bringing the chapter closer to certification and said the standardized FMS manual helped the chapter achieve its goal of certification.

“Moving forward, we will work hard together,” Benally said.

Lee Gambler, chapter president, said it was a long road and a long struggle to get the FMS together for certification.

“It’s been almost 16 years that I have been in office and I already said one day soon, we will have this chapter Five Management System in place,” Gambler said. “I think this is really going to help us, the community.

“I am going to say again that this is a good day to be certified,” he added.

Chilchinbeto was certified by a vote of 3-0.

The certified chapters all received a check for \$160,000 and instructions on how to budget the funds. There is currently 27 LGA certified chapters on the Navajo Nation.

Information: www.nndcd.org



George Arthur, former council delegate for Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, said he has worked for the community in excess of 20 years as delegate. Arthur said he was humbled to be inside the chambers once more. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Lee J. Gambler, chapter president for Chilchinbeto, said it was a good day to be certified. Gambler said over the past 16 years as president, he envisioned the day his chapter would get their Five Management System in place. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Navajo Nation Council Resources and Development Committee Chairwoman Katherine Benally said, “We usually hear that there is no work coming from the Local Governance Support Centers. Today is proof of otherwise.” Benally said moving forward, she will work with the LGSCs. (Photo by Rick Abasta)